



CITY OF PLEASANT HILL

PHONE (925) 671-5209
FAX (925) 682-9327

www.pleasanthill.ca.gov

100 Gregory Lane
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

Application Guide

WHY IS THERE AN ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION?

The Architectural Review Commission (ARC) was established by the City Council to promote and attain quality design, site relationships, and other aesthetic considerations of development in the City. Special attention is given to building design, the arrangement of buildings, parking, landscaping, and landscape design.

The Architectural Review Commission must review and approve a proposed development prior to the issuance of building permits. In addition, the Commission reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Commission on tentative subdivision maps. The Commission also reviews requests for freestanding signs and master sign programs. The Commission may impose conditions and modifications to project plans as necessary to make the necessary findings for approval.

The Zoning ordinance requires that the Architectural Review Commission review each application for a building permit in the following land use districts:

- A. Single-family districts prior to a subdivision;
- B. Multiple-family districts;
- C. Neighborhood business district;
- D. Retail business district;
- E. General commercial district;
- F. Controlled manufacturing district;
- G. Limited Industrial district;
- H. Planned district;
- I. Thoroughfare-commercial district

WHAT ARE THE STEPS?

Step 1 Preliminary Review - Prior to submittal of a formal application, it is recommended that the applicant discuss the preliminary proposal with the Planning Division of the Public Works and Community Development Department. The staff can, if requested, respond back in writing regarding the project conformity with the Zoning Ordinance, applicable site planning, building design, landscaping, and other criteria, and application fee requirements. It is also important to determine if a sign program exists for your development and what are the criteria and standards.

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Step 2 Filing the Application - Application for an Architectural Review should be made to the Planning Division on its Application for Development Review form. The application form must be accompanied by the additional supporting materials specified by the City including plans, drawings, and other project description information necessary to allow adequate review of the proposed action. A filing fee will be required for each application in the amount set by the City Council.

A Planning Division staff member will be assigned to review the application materials for completeness and to prepare a staff report to the Architectural Review Commission. Upon submittal, the application will be reviewed for completeness within thirty (30) days. If the application is complete, the applicant will be notified of a hearing date. If the application is incomplete, the applicant will be notified of the necessary additional information required for a complete submittal. Additional information may be required as staff review of the project progresses.

Step 3 Environmental Review - Most Architectural Review applications will not need to go through a complex Environmental Review Process and may be deemed to be exempt from any further environmental review. To exempt an application, the staff will have to review the application and determine if it is consistent with one of the California Environmental Quality Act exemption classifications.

If a project is not exempt, the staff will prepare an Initial Study and if that study indicates no significant potential environmental impacts, a Negative Declaration (a brief statement describing why an Environmental Impact Report is not required) will be prepared for the Zoning Administrator's approval. In very rare cases, an Environmental Impact Report may have to be prepared.

Step 4 Architectural Review Commission - A study session is recommended for larger size project applications. At this meeting, staff will make an informal review of the proposal which will be followed by the applicant's presentation. The Commission will then give the applicant some general directions and guidelines to follow to complete the application for formal Commission review.

The applicant or future applicant shall submit 6 copies of drawings to staff no less than 21 days prior to the scheduled study session.

Following the study sessions, if any, staff will prepare a staff report to the Architectural Review Commission which includes: (1) a description of the proposal; (2) a summary of its relationship to relevant Zoning Ordinance provisions, as well as its design considerations; and (3) related staff recommendations with respect to project approval. A copy of this report will be sent to the applicant during the week preceding the Architectural Review Commission hearing. Copies will also be available for public review at the Planning Division counter.

At the meeting, staff will make its report and recommendation, which will be followed by the applicant's presentation. The Commission will then make a decision

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based on the staff recommendation, the testimony of the applicant and other interested persons, environmental information, previous comments of the Commission, if any, and any other pertinent information. After review of the plans, the Commission may: (1) approve or conditionally approve the project as submitted; (2) postpone action pending receipt of additional information or amended plans; (3) deny the application. A copy of the Commission's decision and findings will be mailed to the applicant within ten (10) days.

If a hearing on an application is continued for the submission of revised plans or additional information, the revised drawings or additional information must be submitted to the Public Works and Community Development Department Director a minimum of ten (10) calendar days before the next Public Hearing.

Step 5 Building Permit Issuance - After ten (10) days have elapsed from ARC approval of the project (i.e., no appeal), and all application approval requirements and related ordinances have been complied with, the City Building Inspector may issue a Building Permit. The Building Inspector will then work to ensure that the project is completed in compliance with all permits, approved plans, and related conditions.

WHAT MUST BE SUBMITTED?

All submittal information required in the Architectural Submittal Requirements Checklist shall be presented, including the Application for Development Review form and related fees, to the Public Works and Community Development Department before the application can be accepted as complete.

MAY A DECISION BE APPEALED?

You or anyone else who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Architectural Review Commission may appeal that decision to the City Council. To appeal, a written statement and filing fee must be filed with the Agency within ten (10) days after the decision is made at a public meeting. A public hearing will then be set before the City Council to consider the appeal.

If no appeal to a decision is filed within ten (10) days, the decision of the Architectural Review Commission will be considered final.

WHEN DOES THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION MEET?

The Architectural Review Commission holds Public Hearings on the first and third Thursdays of every month. These meetings commence at 5:00 p.m. and are held in the Large Community Room at City Hall.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO OBTAIN ARC APPROVAL?

Normally about seven weeks. This period will be longer if the decision is appealed to the City Council.